

California State Journal of Medicine.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE!

All Scientific Papers submitted for Publication must be typewritten.

Notify the office promptly of any change of address, in order that mailing list and addresses in the Register may be corrected.

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At noon on November 27th, Dr. Philip Mills Jones, Editor of the "California State Journal of Medicine" and Secretary of the Medical Society of the State of California, died of pneumonia at his home in San Francisco.

His unique position as a leader of the organized profession of the State of California will make his loss well-nigh irreparable, and his death will be a great shock to the innumerable physicians throughout the State whom he has befriended both in his individual and his official capacity.

Owing to the lateness of the date, an extended notice of Dr. Jones' life and activities must be postponed until a later issue.

EDITORIAL NOTES

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Committee on Scientific Program wish to announce that so many applications for places on the program have been received that no further papers can be considered unless a vacancy hereafter occurs. Those whose papers have already been accepted are again reminded that there must be in the hands of the Committee, not later than January 1st, 1917, the full title of their paper with abstract. Any one failing to comply with these regulations will be automatically dropped from the program.

MALPRACTISE INDEMNITY FUND.

Are you one of the 2220 members of the Society who have intended to contribute to the fund, or are going to do so, or are thinking about it but have not done so? If you are one of this class, you had better send your check for \$15.00 and your note for like amount, payable one year after date, immediately.

INDEMNITY FUND.

The correspondence which has developed since the announcement of the creation of the Malpractice Indemnity Fund has been very voluminous. Practically without exception, every one who has written to the secretary has approved the plan.

One man writes as follows: "Happy is the man that has never been sued or threatened with a suit, but the fateful day may come to any physician, and we, had better all stand together to take care of ourselves when we have such a good chance as now is offered."

The writer of the letter is perfectly correct. If the physicians of this State do not cooperate amongst themselves for their own protection, they will very soon be in exceedingly bad case. Suits for damages for alleged malpractice are steadily increasing and, as was recorded in last month's JOURNAL, occasionally one goes against the physician. There should be at least 1000 members of the State Society with sufficient intelligence and business sense to take advantage of a plan whereby they absolutely protect themselves at a small cost and without any overhead charges against their investment. There are no dividends to pay; there is nothing to pay out of the fund except the actual cost of settlements. Doubtless there are hundreds of doctors, members of this society, who would cheerfully be inveigled into buying some wildcat oil stock, but who will deliberate for days or weeks before investing the small sum of \$15.00 for their own protection.

AGAIN THE INDEMNITY FUND.

A member who transmits his check and note as a contribution to this fund, raises the question as to whether there would be any objection to a member also carrying insurance, and whether it would be of any value. There certainly can be no objection. It would be of value only to this extent, that it would conserve the fund; because, firstly, if such a member was sued, the insurance company would have to bear the expenses of the suit, though our attorneys might cooperate in the actual trial if it were necessary; secondly, if a judgment went against the member, the insurance company would have to pay up to the amount of the policy, thus conserving the fund of our own members in our own hands.

ABOUT INCOMES.

One gentleman and member of our society, who sent in a postcard with the information as nearly as he could give it, also sent a letter which is so sound and reasonable that we are almost tempted to publish his name. However, as his permission has not been secured, the name is omitted, but the letter follows:

"Oct. 28, 1916.

"Dear Doctor:

"In answer to your favor with postal card enclosed to fill out, would state that I am in a farming district where it is somewhat difficult to

come at one's income and a man working for wages gets very little indeed.

"Nearly every farmer has an automobile, but if the truth was known very few of them are paid for, so that the doctor has to wait a long time for his money at times.

"I have my office built in one corner of my yard so have no direct rent to pay; as to practise, it is certainly general and includes everything, and I must know everything which can possibly accrue.

"I drive a Ford car and buy a new one every year, turning old one in for close to two hundred dollars less than the new car costs.

"Between gas, oil, and repairs, my car costs me close to fifty dollars per month, but naturally I live in it.

"It is a hard scratch to make ends meet and keep bills paid up, and we are never able to take a vacation and feel that we are able to afford it.

"I seem to be rather favored, if anything, in the way of a location and seem to be doing about as well as the others around me.

"What I feel worse about is the lack of professional courtesy or the absolute dishonesty among the men of the profession with whom I come in contact.

"One can hardly have a consultation nowadays without losing the patient if that patient happens to be a desirable one and the other fellow can work the game.

"And it is not the irregulars entirely either, nor does the fact of both being members of the county medical society tend to protect you.

"It is a Utopian dream, of course, to expect perfection, but if the members of the profession would only practise decent honesty with their patients and other members there would be no need of a millennium, for that would indeed be Utopia sufficient for most of us.

"I believe that were the profession honest and sincere, there would be sufficient practise for everybody and more money.

"Fraternally yours."

SOCIAL INSURANCE COMMISSION.

The circular letter and postcard asking for information as to physicians' incomes, which were sent out the latter part of October, have produced a very interesting group of replies. A gratifyingly large number of physicians in the State, both members and non-members, could see the reason for this and have sent in as nearly accurate figures as they could. A very large number have also written letters explaining the circumstances and surroundings in which they live and practise. It is rather an unpleasant task to say, however, that some presumably dignified and gentlemanly members of the medical profession have seen fit to write the most insulting messages on the postcards, in one or two cases descending to a degree of vulgarity and filth which necessitated sending the postcard in a sealed envelope. It is difficult to understand the type of mind that can descend to a thing of this sort, or fail to realize or understand the import of a move-

ment directly intended for the benefit of the whole profession.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Perchance and peradventure this Merry Christmas greeting comes a little ahead of time, but nevertheless may it be taken and held to the 25th of the month before due acceptance.

These are strange days and strange times. Conditions are varying and changing almost with each passing day. Let us, however, in saying goodbye to the year, look forward to the next one with courage, all thankful that we are alive, and still more thankful to a divine providence that we live in California. Again, Merry Christmas!

NEEDED REFORM OF COUNTY SOCIETIES.

At the present time the practise of medicine is undergoing rapid changes of such a nature and degree as to rouse the profession to serious contemplation of the problems at issue and cause a feeling of unrest and uncertainty in regard to the future. Such a critical juncture in the professional situation may be viewed with equanimity and perhaps a brightened hope by those who labor under the protecting wing of an institution or a limited organization. Unfortunately, however, the great mass of independent practitioners must feel the force of this insidiously growing current, fearing that eventually their individual efforts to secure justice to themselves must fail them.

There has never been in the history of the State Society a more imperative need for the effective organization and consolidation of the mass of the profession than at the present time. But the State Society labors under a serious disadvantage insofar as its strength is the collective strength of its component county societies. These as the ultimate units must develop greater force and effectiveness in order to aid the State organization, if it is to secure a just regard for the reasonable demands of its members whether before the general public or its representatives.

The time is therefore opportune for enlarging the activities of the county organization. While heretofore these activities have been devoted largely to academic purposes, as long as they are limited to this field they do not afford that opportunity for closer cooperation and consciousness of purpose that is needed by the medical profession.

To remedy this deficiency the policy of a county society must extend beyond the scientific program and the library, however attractive. The county society should encourage a spirit of free association among its members. It should formulate plans tending to increase sociability and provide facilities having this end in view. Societies have been too indifferent in the matter of securing new and desirable members and they should make every effort to increase membership. Above all they need leaders of clear insight and in close sympathy with the body of the profession and the movements that affect it, men of marked executive ability whose utterances and unstinted, disinterest-